

ART THROUGH THE MOTION PICTURE

PRESENTED BY

THE ART IN CINEMA SOCIETY

AND

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

Four Friday Evenings in October . . . 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th, 1948 . . . at 8:00 P. M.

OCTOBER 8 FERNAND LEGER IN AMERICA
 JÉAN HELION—ONE ARTIST AT WORK
 HENRI MATISSE
 ARISTIDE MAILLOL

OCTOBER 15 MYSTIC LAMB (Van Eyck's "Adoration
 of the Lamb")
 MEMLING (Analysis of the Paintings of
 Hans Memling)
 THE STONE WONDERS OF NAUMBURG
 TAPISseries DE FRANCE
 SIENA AND SIMONE MARTINI

OCTOBER 22 TREE TRUNK TO HEAD (Chaim Gross)
 GEORGE GROSZ AT WORK
 WILLIAM GROPPER AT WORK
 ALEXANDER CALDER
 THE MAKING OF A MURAL
 (Anton Refrigier)
 THE MAKING OF A WOOD BLOCK
 (Meta Hendel)

OCTOBER 29 TOTEMS
 ESKIMO ARTS AND CRAFTS
 WEST WIND (Tom Thompson, Canadian
 Artist)
 KLEE WYCK (Emily Carr, Canadian
 Artist)
 CHANTS POPULAIRES #4

ADMISSION BY SERIES SUBSCRIPTION ONLY

Series to Public \$2.00 plus 40c tax—\$2.40

Series to Museum Members \$1.00 plus 20c tax—\$1.20

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PUBLIC ☐

(Make check or money order payable to the San Francisco Museum of Art and enclose stamped, self-addressed envelope for return of tickets.) This series is organized on a non-profit, non-commercial basis with admission by Series Subscription Only.

art in cinema CONTEMPORARY EXPERIMENTAL FILMS OF IMPORTANCE

An art from which youth is barred from practicing freely is sentenced to death in advance. The moving picture camera should be like a fountain pen, which anyone may use to translate his soul onto paper. The 16mm. film presents the only solution, and in this I think America should take the initiative.... It offers an opportunity of trying for miracles.

JEAN COCTEAU

FRIDAY, FEBURARY 11th, 8 p. m.

MOTHER'S DAY—JAMES BROUGHTON'S nostalgic, witty mosaic of The Family's pictorial and emotional atmosphere, repeated on this program with the premiere presentation of the new sound track, an original score written for the film by HOWARD BRUBECK and performed by members of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra conducted by the composer.

LIGHT REFLECTIONS—by JAMES E. DAVIS, with original musical score by EDWARD MULLEN. The latest film by this famous painter and sculptor in transparent plastics.

AN IMPROVISATION—by DORSEY ALEXANDER. The development of an "automatic" unplanned abstraction on film.

THE PETRIFIED DOG—written, directed and photographed by SIDNEY PETERSON; produced by Workshop 20, The California School of Fine Arts. A film in which attention is focused on what has been called "the dream world as a place," with an unusual experimental sound track.

DIME STORE—by DORSEY ALEXANDER. A carefully composed sequential arrangement of familiar objects treated in a rhythmical or musical form of conception.

NUMBERS 1 and 4—by HARRY SMITH. Mr. Smith continues his experiments in the visual aspects of emotion sequences.

Sibyl Moholy-Nagy will give a short talk on the avant-garde film experiments of the late Lazlo Moholy-Nagy.

FRIDAY, FEBURARY 18th, 8 p. m.

MEDITATION ON VIOLENCE—MAYA DEREN'S latest work, a dance film with the Chinese dancer Chi'ao-Li Chi, based on movements from the Wu Tang and the Shao-lin schools of Chinese boxing, with a climactic sword episode. Miss Deren's first sound film.

RITUAL IN TRANSFIGURED TIME—MAYA DEREN'S famous film with the dancer Harriet Westbrook, will be repeated here in conjunction with her new film.

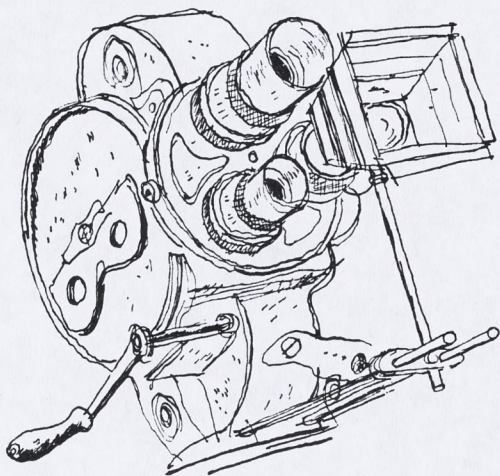
THE STONE CHILDREN—by KENT MUNSON and THEODORE HUFF. An ironic allegory and at the same time an experimental documentary.

FRAGMENT OF SEEKING—by CURTIS HARRINGTON. A singular and moving cinematic portrait, a fragment from the existence of an adolescent Narcissus.

INTROSPECTION—by SARA KATHRYN ARLEDGE. A repeat showing of this noteworthy and brilliant dance-on-film experiment.

These two programs do not constitute a series, and no series subscriptions will be sold. Admission: 90c each program for Museum non-members; 60c for Museum members. Admission may be purchased at the door, or in advance by mail. Please send stamped, self-addressed envelope.

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART : Civic Center : SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA



art in cinema

two special programs

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THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART : Civic Center : SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

AKC: special
1974 158 programs

Series 3

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA----- CONTEMPORARY EXPERIMENTAL FILMS

Program Notes for February 11th

- I. LIGHT REFLECTIONS by Jim Davis, with original music by Edward Muller. Mr. Davis of Princeton, New Jersey, has earned considerable reputation as both a painter and sculptor in transparent plastics. During the last few years he has experimented extensively with transparencies in relation to the film medium.
- II. ZIGZAG by Frank Stauffacher; San Francisco, 1948. There is a certain strange mechanical beauty in the color and nervousness of the neon advertising signs at night. The cutting is loosely tied to the nervous dissonances and rhythms of Igor Stravinsky's "Ebony Concerto", which seemed to have the appropriate quality inherent in the zigzagging gases blazing in the neon tube itself.
- III. MOTHER'S DAY written and directed by James Broughton, assisted by Kermit Sheets, photographed by Frank Stauffacher, with an original musical score written by Howard Brubeck and performed by members of the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra directed by the composer. MOTHER'S DAY is a playfully nostalgic family album which attempts to recapture some of the pictorial atmosphere in everyone's emotional world of growing-up. Its picture-book story, juxtaposing memory, fantasy and document, evokes an imaginative reality of childhood that is both poetic and ironic.

I N T E R M I S S I O N

- IV. FILMS NO. 1 and 4 by Harry Smith, 1949. The designs in these two films were applied directly to transparent 35mm. film base without use of photographic means. In No. 1, the organic forms were drawn with a crow-quill pen and color added with a small brush. In No. 4 small pieces of masking tape were cut to the shape of the design and applied to the film which was then painted the background color. In No. 4, the colors have been limited mainly to reds and blue-greens and the forms to quadrilaterals except for a short sequence of more restful circles at the very end. Types of movement employed have also been limited to the smallest possible number so that whatever interest and sequence the film possesses can depend on the rhythmic recurrence of a few specific non-objective tensions rather than curiosity on the part of the spectator as to what the forms are going to do next.
- V. Sibyl Moholy-Nagy will give a short talk on the avant-garde films of the late Laszlo Moholy-Nagy.
- VI. DIME STORE, MOOD, and IMPROVISATION, three abstract films by Dorsey Alexander, present three approaches in a search for a typical film structure that might correspond to the formal structure in music. The first, composed of common items from a five and ten cent store, is the most formal, one might say. The last is improvised without plan.
- VI. THE PETRIFIED DOG, 1948-9. Produced by Workshop 20. Directed by Sidney Peterson. This film is a fantasy in which attention is focused on what has been called the Dream World as a Place. The point of reference is the mind of an eight yearold girl. The sound track is an experiment in the displacement of an affective continuity.

Workshop 20 is a unique film workshop at the California School of Fine Arts, conducted by Mr. Peterson, a unit in which artists in other media collaborate on the production of experimental films as an adjunct to their work in visual form.

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA----- CONTEMPORARY EXPERIMENTAL FILMS

Program Notes for February 18th

ABSTRACT INTERLUDE produced by the Oakland College of Arts and Crafts, is a collaborative venture in creating an abstract film as a project in a new, experimental class at the College. The students participating are, for the most part, inexperienced - or were- in cinematography. For a first film, the results are uniquely noteworthy.

FRAGMENT OF SEEKING by Curtis Harrington, Los Angeles, 1947. This film is in the nature of a cinematic portrait, a fragment from the existence of an adolescent Narcissus. Here we find not the arrogant, beautiful creature of legend, but rather the questioning seeker, not wholly understanding the nature of his desire - until the final, overpowering revelation. The continuity of time reveals the image of desire, always there, just beyond; and then in the moment of fulfillment, the truth is participated, and the question answered.

The players in the film remain anonymous: they have become images, inextricably welded to the lights and shadows of the total film. (Curtis Harrington)

META by Robert Howard, San Francisco, 1947. Although the forms, and to some extent, the colors in this little film are almost completely arbitrary - depending upon the hazard of the medium photographed - the image of paints dropped into water - enormously enlarged - reveals a world of phenomenal beauty.

INTROSPECTION Planned and directed by Sara Kathryn Arledge; Photography by Clyde E. Smith and Don Sykes; Jimmy Mitchell, Bill Martin and Joe Riccard as the Dancers; John R. Baxter - the heads.

This film is a series of loosely related technical and aesthetic experiments with the belief that effective planning for a dance film has little in common with stage dance choreography, and that effective body movements of the dancer in a film are not necessarily those most effective on the stage. In these experiments, simple body movements were combined with some of the effects of which the camera is capable, to investigate the dance possibilities of the film medium. (Sara Kathryn Arledge.)

INTERMISSION

A STUDY IN CHOREOGRAPHY FOR CAMERA by Maya Deren and Talley Beatty. New York, 1945.

RITUAL IN TRANSFIGURED TIME conceived and directed by Maya Deren. Photographed by Hella Heyman. Choreographic collaboration: Frank Westbrook. Principal performers: Rita Christiana and Frank Westbrook.

MEDITATION ON VIOLENCE by Maya Deren. Performed by Ch'ao-Li Chi. With music: Chinese flute and Haitian drums.

Program notes on Miss Deren's three films will be read over the public address system.

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NOTE: Another Art in Cinema program is being planned for sometime in April, to contain the latest examples of the European avant-garde, among them, the Italian Racconto da un Affresco, Il Canto della Creatore, Il Paradiso Terrestre, and the French La Rose et la Reseda.

SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART
WAR MEMORIAL CIVIC CENTER SAN FRANCISCO 2 CALIFORNIA
HEMLOCK 1-2040

F A M O U S F I L M S E R I E S

OCTOBER 18th through NOVEMBER 8th 1949 TUESDAY EVENINGS AT 8 O'CLOCK

(Program subject to change without notice)

- OCTOBER 18 LA MARSEILLAISE, 1939, in French with English titles, directed by Jean Renoir, with Louis Jouvet, Pierre Renoir and Lise Delamere, (an epic of the French revolution and unique in that it is probably the only picture ever produced with funds raised by popular subscription.
- OCTOBER 25 LYDIA, 1941, produced and directed by Alexander Korda, with Merle Oberon, Joseph Cotten and Alan Marshall.
- NOVEMBER 1 DIE FLEDERMAUS, 1947, in color with German dialogue and English titles, directed by Geza Von Bolvary, with Willi Dohm, Marte Harell and Willi Fritsch, based on the famous operetta of the same name by Johann Strauss.
- NOVEMBER 8 ALGIERS, 1938, directed by John Cromwell, the American version of the French story "Pepe Le Moko", with Charles Boyer and Hedy La Marr in one of her first American films.

MEMBERSHIP IN FILM SERIES 45¢

Initial admission 75¢ (includes admission to first film)

Remainder of series 30¢ (with FILM MEMBERSHIP CARD)

FREE to Museum members

SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART
WAR MEMORIAL CIVIC CENTER SAN FRANCISCO 2 CALIFORNIA
HEMLOCK 1-2040

F A M O U S F I L M S E R I E S

NOVEMBER 15th through DECEMBER 6th 1949

TUESDAY EVENINGS AT 8 O'CLOCK

(Program subject to change without notice)

- NOVEMBER 15 MURDERERS AMONG US, 1947, directed by Wolfgang Staudte, German dialogue, with English titles, with Hildegard Knef and Ernst Borchert. Miss Knef was awarded the prize for the best performance of the year at the Locarno Film Festival.
- NOVEMBER 22 THE BOYS FROM SYRACUSE, 1940, directed by Edward Sutherland, one of the funniest musical farce-comedies ever produced, from the Broadway hit of the same name and starring the late Joe Penner with Martha Raye, Charles Butterworth, Rosemary Lane and Allan Jones.
- NOVEMBER 29 STREET OF SHADOWS, 1937, directed by G.W. Pabst, musical score by Arthur Honegger, French dialogue, with English titles, starring Louis Jouvet, Viviane Romance and Pierre Fresnay, a story of espionage and counter-espionage in the Balkans during World War I.
- DECEMBER 6 THE PRIVATE LIFE OF HENRY VIII, 1933, produced and directed in England by Alexander Korda, starring Charles Laughton, Merle Oberon, Robert Donat, Gertrude Lawrence and Wendy Barrie.

MEMBERSHIP IN FILM SERIES 45¢

Initial admission 75¢ (includes admission to first film)

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FREE to Museum members

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART
ART IN CINEMA - SPECIAL PROGRAM

November 9, 1950

Two films scheduled for tonight, The Life and Death of a Hollywood Extra and Moods of the Sea, both by Slavko Vorkapich, have been up until this printing delayed in shipment. If they do arrive, program notes for them will be read over the address system. If they do not arrive, a program of Norman McLaren's delightful hand-painted films will be substituted, including his Begone Dull Care, Dots, Loops, and Poulette Grise. In addition, the highly interesting Loon's Necklace will be presented.

There will be a 10 minute intermission between the showing of these films and the presentation of AI-YE.

AI-YE (Mankind). Produced and photographed by Ian Hugo; Music by Osborne Smith; Distributed by Brandon Films, Inc. -- Competent authorities have stated that the method employed in this film marks a new departure in film making. The originality consists first in employing documentary material, not for its own sake, or to tell about the life in any particular part of the world, but without words or explanation, using human, animal and natural material in such a way as to tell a consecutive coordinated story understandable and appealing to all peoples, no matter what their background, their country, or their race. Sequence is maintained by the recurring image of the boat travelling through the tropical lagoon, and by using the white egrets as if they were commas or pauses in a narration. Above all, the rhythm is constantly maintained, first by the sequence of the images themselves, some of them recurring at intervals in different forms as in a symphony, and second by the drum and voice accompaniment that gives the effect of having been a part of the original scene. The words used by Osborne Smith suggest any and all languages. In fact, they are improvised by him as a result of his study of African languages, although, as already stated, the direct inspiration came from this film.

Ai-Ye means "mankind" in the Nigerian language of Africa. This is a universal story of mankind's voyage beginning while he and the animals sleep and dream of the past. The boat takes them through the tropical lagoon from birth, through childhood, adolescence, pain, struggle, old age, death and burial in mouth of the volcano in the clouds. With the 100 foot plunge of the diver man returns to the ocean from which life came. Renewed, he emerges and climbs to seek the image he saw in his dream and, with the help of a workman, finds this image. Inspired by this discovery the boat launches forward again in search of the bread of life, - the discovery of bread and its making, the joy of eating, leading to the search for action, ending in the capture of the giant ocean matarava.

Joyous with this fulfillment, man and animal climb and man returns triumphant to his mother ocean in a second plunge from the high rock. Responding, the ocean rises in a fury of excitement and dashes enormous waves against the cliffs. But on the cliffs stands the dinosaur, his ageless eye calm as those of the clay images - as old as they, but living.

The maker of this film believes that titles and narration, far from helping an audience to understand a theme, often actually limit the field of vision, feeling and comprehension which the average person possesses to a far greater degree than he is usually given credit for. Furthermore, as each person has his own associations, the absence of explanation and the presence of basic human images carried through the sequences of life in the form of a voyage, give the greatest possible stimulus to the imagination of each spectator.

Art in Cinema's Seventh Series will be given in February, 1951. Among the films scheduled will be Le Monde de Paul Delvaux by Henri Storck, Aubervilliers, Sang Des Betes, Lafcadie, The Tear, Flugten, all recent experimental films from Denmark and France. James Broughton's new film Sextette, and Frank Stauffacher's Notes on the Port of St. Francis will also be shown.

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA

Special Program

Friday, May 2, 1952

DR. ROGER MANVELL, Director of the British Film Academy
will discuss STYLES IN BRITISH FEATURE FILMS

Dr. Manvell will illustrate his lecture with excerpts from the following films:

"BRIEF ENCOUNTER", 1945, Directed by David Lean

"SCOTT OF THE ANTARTIC", Directed by Charles Frend

"MEN OF TWO WORLDS", (Also known as "KISEGNA") 1934

"SEVEN DAYS TO NOON", 1951, John and Roy Boulting

"HENRY V", 1944, Directed by Sir Laurence Olivier

"THE THIRD MAN", 1949, Directed by Carol Reed

"ROGER MANVELL, Critic, Creator, Chronicler"

Jack Glenn, President, Screen Directors Guild of New York

"Many creative people nurse a desire all through their lives to play Hamlet but never get around to satisfying this noble urge. Not so Roger Manvell. He played Hamlet at the age of twelve - was not only the star but also the producer, and he succeeded, he likes to recall, in offending the whole school.

"This penchant for getting to the point in a hurry stood Roger Manvell in good stead when in 1931 he plunged into the vast and rolling sea of the cinema. He brought to films the fruits of his early love affair with the drama, which had developed through his school days at Peterborough and London University, where he took a Ph.D.; and through ten years in the field of adult education during which he taught literature, drama and play production. With his own company he had produced almost every type of play from Greek tragedy to the modern experimentals, putting special emphasis on the works of Shaw, Shakespeare, O'Neill and the poetic dramas of W.B. Yeats. And when at last he turned to survey the cinema he stood on high and certain ground.

"He was an early pioneer of the Film Society movement and became a lecturer on the cinema all over Europe and in the Middle East. During World War II he served as Film Officer for the Ministry of Information. In 1945 he was made Research Officer for the British Film Institute and in 1947 was appointed to the position he now holds as Director of the British Film Academy. The Academy, analogous to the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, promotes research, studies the latest developments of the screen and encourages film art by a series of awards. It represents the senior film-makers of Great Britain, who meet weekly through the greater part of the year.

"Today, at 42, Roger Manvell is recognized as one of the world's foremost authorities on the cinema. Through his extensive writings, lectures and appearances on radio and television he exercises an important influence on the acceptance of film as art. His numerous books on the cinema are known all over the world. One of them, "FILM", of the Pelican series, has sold over 300,000 copies; it is used as a textbook at the University of Southern California. For the British Film Institute he started, soon after the war, a pioneer scheme of writing the history of the British film. Volume 1, written in collaboration with Rachel Low, appeared in the Allen and Unwin series.

"In the field of broadcasting Dr. Manvell spends generously from his astonishing fund of energy. He began in this field before the war by writing and acting in radio plays for children. Many British youngsters have an oblique notion of the voice of Roger Manvell, having heard him in the roles of various animals. Today he is one of the chairmen of the BBC's Critics' Programme, the weekly survey of British broadcasting. He is also a television commentator and is TV critic for the "New Statesman".

"Dr. Manvell is on his first visit to the United States. His forthcoming lecture tour will take him all over this country and Canada, and during this journey he will meet for the first time many of the cinema workers whom up to now he has known only through their films and about whom he has written in his ceaseless analysis and appraisal of motion pictures. In Hollywood he will present British Academy awards to Walt Disney for "Beaver Valley" and to UPA for "Gerald McBoing Boing". He will return to England at the end of May, at which time he is certain to have added enormously to what he calls the satisfaction that builds constantly in the life of one who has been fortunate enough to make his greatest interest his life's work."

Dr. Manvell's appearance for this ART IN CINEMA program was arranged by Frank Stauffacher in cooperation with the BRITISH INFORMATION SERVICES.

Future Film Programs at the San Francisco Museum of Art:

Friday, May 16, 8:00 P.M. - A SPECIAL FILM REVIEW IN HONOR OF JAMES BROUGHTON
A San Francisco film maker, Broughton was a recent prize-winner at the Edinburgh Film Festival.

Tickets: Museum Members, \$.75; Non-members, \$1.00

Saturdays and Sundays at 2:00 and 3:30 P.M. (beginning May 24 and through July 6):
"A VISIT WITH HENRI MATISSE" and other films on historical and contemporary French art. (Included in admission to Matisse exhibition).

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

Special Film Program

Friday, May 16, 1952

A Special Film Review in Honor of

James B

JAMES BROUGHTON

Recent International Prize-Winner, Edinburgh Film Festival

PROGRAM

Statement from James Broughton, to be read by Bill Brewer

Films by James Broughton, previously shown at "Art In Cinema"

MOTHER'S DAY

LOONY TOM

Intermission

FOUR IN THE AFTERNOON

ADVENTURES OF JIMMY

Statement by Cecile Starr in Saturday Review of Literature, July 28, 1951:

"What a pleasure in a season of sober documentaries and grim experimentals to have these four fresh films to review! By combining external aspects of reality with inner wit and warmth these new releases avoid the usual pitfalls; they are sparkling and bold in the face of reality and revealing rather than obscure in their introspection. With free use of rhythms, poetic comment, and bared emotion at first glance they invite the label of "experimental films". But they are films, not experiments. Instead of breaking their own backs bending away from possible recognition, understanding, and appreciation, they reach out toward the audience creating a new plane of participation midway between the filmed activity and the seated spectator. They are direct, warm, and inviting; few adult audiences can fail to greet them with open arms. For all their virtues it might as well be made clear here and now that these little films do not belong anywhere in gradeschool curricula."

Program Notes by James Broughton

Mother's Day (U. S. A., 1948)

Written and directed by James Broughton. Assistant Director: Kermit Sheets. Produced by Farallone Films. Photography: Frank Stauffacher. Music: by Howard Brubeck.

Every child's mother who was once a child is usually obliged to grow up and to alter her toys. But very often there are certain cherished old playthings - a window, a mirror, a scrapbook - which she wishes could refuse to alter. And she may also regret in each new picture-game of her children how the play of their reflections alter her. Images like these tend to provoke a rather askew nostalgia.

However much she may desire her mirror to tell her she is still a princess, she can see for herself how fairy tales go awry. She may even grow into a kind of witch-queen, when she can no longer play the fairy godmother with her children's own fancies. To say nothing of their father becoming a real ogre, who likes to order all the windows shut.

And if she wants her children to keep her scrapbook, and to illustrate it, they seldom picture it the way she sees it. Or they merely find it diverting. For as they grow up to the mirror, they open their own windows. And when they overtake her toys and begin to collect her into their own souvenirs, she may be left unwillingly to repicture her scrapbook.

For her favorite bedtime story is apt to remain: "Once upon a time there was a very beautiful and refined young girl who had a great many suitors. But she married the wrong one. Then she had a great many children and she did not know what to do with them either."

Loony Tom, the Happy Lover (U. S. A. 1951)

Written, directed and photographed by James Broughton. Produced by Farallone Films. Featuring Kermit Sheets in the title role. Music by Ralph Gilbert.

The approach to earthly pleasure is, artistically, often too effortful. Many fascinating but fairly grim works have extolled the necessity of joy, and the duty of loving one's neighbor. Much rarer is the immediate experience itself, the pure exuberance.

This little film, like its optimistic hero, is devoted to the sprightly cause of spreading joy about the world. Its theme is a testimonial to the perennial desirability of fair womanhood, its style a contemporary tribute to the lively art of early cinema.

The character of Loony Tom stems from a noble tradition of comic pantomime. But his caprices are not a mere imitation of silent film style. What I wanted to capture was the delight in movement and the inventive action which existed in the early cinema - but with a certain marked and poetic difference. And that is, by making the total effect something much more lyrical than slapstick comedies ever sought to be.

Loony Tom himself lacks, deliberately, the violence and sadism which have been trademarks of the form. As, also, he lacks pathos. For he does not need these distortions. He believes wholeheartedly in the pleasures of love; they are for him the daily order of existence and life's surest remedy for all ills. Loony Tom's days are devoted to love and to making lovely ladies happy. So the film might be said to represent an ordinary day in the life of a free spirit, who allows the triumph of love to cut its own capers.

Four in the Afternoon (U. S. A., 1951)

Written, directed and photographed by James Broughton. Assisted by Kermit Sheets. Produced by Farallone Films. Music by William O. Smith. Voices: James Broughton, Madeline Gleason.

A film suite in four parts, based on poems in MUSICAL CHAIRS, by James Broughton.

1. Game Little Gladys
2. The Gardener's Son
3. Princess Printemps
4. The Ageing Balletomane

The primary intention in this film was to create a fresh form of cinematic poetry blending image, music, and spoken verse in an expressive counterpoint. I chose from my book, MUSICAL CHAIRS, four poems that were related in theme but suggesting quite different treatments, and used them as a springboard for developing the visual material. I wanted the four to comprise a suite, each movement self-sufficient, but in sequence to make a total statement by their juxtapositions, their development, and the restatement of themes.

Illustration of the poems was never intended, for the verses are used as another dimension: inner voices of the protagonists, or comments on the action seen. The method of this film may be called choreographic, in the broadest sense: the images have been visualized for the camera, and the rhythms controlled by the editing whereby time and space may be extended or contracted.

Most serious experimental films have been concerned with the filmmaker's private night world. But in Four in the Afternoon we have daydreams, not nightmares. Thus, each section is a different form of romantic idealization of the wish for love - which is the most common content of anyone's daydream.

A daydreamer willingly follows his dream, takes pleasure in his imaginings. He is not at the mercy of his unconscious nor distressed by where it leads him, as the nightdreamer is. The daydreamer borrows his fantasies from the world about him, without meditating upon the discrepancies between the reality possible to him and the impossible idealism of his wishing.

The movements of this quartet are variations on the theme of the quest for love, embodying forms of romanticization at crucial age levels, from the child of 10 to the man of 40. But each movement, like a lyric poem, compresses only the essence of a realm of feeling into a compact moment.

Adventures of Jimmy (U. S. A., 1951)

Written and directed by James Broughton. Produced by Farallone Films.
Photography: Frank Stauffacher. Editing: Kermit Sheets. Music by Weldon Kees.
Commentary spoken by James Broughton.

This film I describe as 'an amorous fable in documentary style.' For in its form it is a kind of picaresque document that lightheartedly spoofs the overworked autobiographical subject-matter of contemporary literature: the sensitive young man seeking companionship and self-fulfillment in an unfriendly modern world...

In large measure this film is motivated by an impatience with the popular cliché of frustration. For Jimmy presents us with a slightly different side of the vital problems of loneliness and the obsession with the personal fantasy in an impersonal world. Jimmy is a plucky fellow, reasonably healthy, certainly modest. Granted that he is a bit confused, but he has persistence of a high order, and so perhaps deserves to find in the end his secret dream fulfilled.

I made a particular effort to shape this film in a casual and effortless film style, presenting its elliptical ADVENTURES as a straightforward but compulsive little travelogue which explores fleetly both the pathos and the absurdity of the neurotic as hero.
